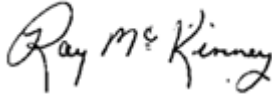


EFFECTIVE DATE: 08/26/05

EXPIRATION DATE: 03/31/07

PROGRAM POLICY LETTER NO. P05-V-1

FROM: RAY McKINNEY
Administrator for
Coal Mine Safety and Health



SUBJECT: Identification of Disconnecting Devices and Circuit Breakers and
Interpretation of 30 CFR Sections 75.601, 903 and 904

Scope

Coal mine operators, miners and miners' representatives, Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) enforcement personnel, and other interested parties should have this information.

Purpose

This Program Policy Letter (PPL) interprets the term "disconnecting device" as used in Sections 75.601 and 75.903 of Title 30 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). This PPL also clarifies existing MSHA policies regarding the identification requirements of "disconnecting devices" as applicable to the provisions of 30 CFR 75.601 and 75.903, and describes how these policies interact with the identification requirement for "circuit breaker[s]" in 30 CFR 75.904. Finally, this PPL supersedes PPL No. P03-V-2 previously issued on June 17, 2003.

Policy

30 CFR § 75.601 requires that "[d]isconnecting devices used to disconnect power from trailing cables shall be plainly marked and identified and such devices shall be equipped or designed in such a manner that it can be determined by visual observation that the power is disconnected." MSHA interprets that the standard requires that both the plug and the receptacle be marked for identification in a similar manner. A trailing cable plug ("cathead") and receptacle together constitute a "disconnecting device." The trailing cable plug and receptacle are designed to be used together as a means of connecting or disconnecting power.

In addition, 30 CFR 75.903 requires that "[d]isconnecting devices shall be installed in conjunction with the circuit breaker to provide visual evidence that the power is disconnected." In defining the term "disconnecting device" under 30 CFR § 75.903,

MSHA's policy states that "[a] connecting plug on the outby end of the trailing cable connected to the power center or distribution box will be accepted as a disconnecting device." [Program Policy Manual at 75.903.]

30 CFR 75.904 further requires that "[c]ircuit breakers shall be marked for identification." MSHA's Program Policy Manual requires the circuit breaker to be marked to clearly identify the circuit or machine receiving power through the circuit breaker. This provision means that the circuit breaker and the receptacle associated with it must be labeled the same.

The identification requirements of these three standards were promulgated so that disconnecting devices and circuit breakers are plainly marked to lessen the chance of energizing a cable while repairs are being made on the cable, or on any attached equipment. Identification ensures that the circuit on which work is being performed is de-energized and thus protects against shock and electrocution hazards. For maximum safety, when complying with the provisions of Sections 75.601, 75.903, and 75.904, the receptacle, the plug, and the circuit breaker should be labeled the same and identify the equipment being powered. An example would be, in the case of a shuttle car, the receptacle, the plug, and the circuit breaker through which the shuttle car is receiving power each be labeled as "shuttle car."

Background

There had been some confusion as to the definition of a "disconnecting device." This confusion resulted in inconsistency in enforcing the identification requirement of circuit breakers and disconnecting devices. The Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission issued a decision in U.S. Steel Mining Co., 10 FMSHRC 1138 (1988) regarding the labeling of trailing cable receptacles. The decision established the definition of "disconnecting device" with respect to 30 CFR 75.601. The Commission affirmed the Secretary's position that requiring the trailing cable plugs and receptacles to be labeled similarly is a reasonable interpretation of 75.601. For both 75.601 and 75.903, MSHA interprets the term "disconnecting device" in the same manner. In addition, the Secretary wishes to avoid confusion over the related labeling requirement for "circuit breakers" in 30 CFR 75.904.

Authority

The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 and 30 CFR §§ 75.601, 75.903, and 75.904.

Internet Availability

This program policy letter may be viewed on the World Wide Web by accessing the MSHA Home Page at <http://www.msha.gov> and then choosing "Compliance Info."

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